

## QUAESTIONES ENTOMOLOGICAE

A periodical record of entomological investigation published at the Department of Entomology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Volume 11

Number 4

October 1975

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### BOOK NOTICE

WALKER, E. M., and P. S. CORBET. 1975. The Odonata of Canada and Alaska. Volume three, Part III: the Anisoptera – three families. University of Toronto Press, Toronto [Ontario], and Buffalo [New York]. xvi + 307 pages, 45 plates, including line drawings and photographs. Price \$25.00 Canadian.

This volume concludes the first extensive systematic treatment of the northern Nearctic elements of this order of insects, noted both for its antiquity and its syndrome of highly derived structural and behavioral features. The Odonata are also noted for attracting the attention of brilliant and distinguished biologists, and providing for those individuals a worthy medium of expression for their talents. It is both fitting and satisfying to find the name P. S. Corbet associated with the name E. W. Walker. As noted by G. B. Wiggins in the Foreword, Professor Walker, the sole author of the first two volumes in this series, suffering from the ravages of advanced age, did not live to see publication of the third volume. In 1964, Professor Corbet accepted the challenge to complete the work and, in doing so, he maintained the style of the earlier volumes, unobtrusively adding his own knowledge and observations to those of the senior author.

The Introduction provides guidance to effective use of the book by setting out fully and clearly the arrangement and limitations of the contents (for instance, characters used in keys to immatures are intended only for recognition of nymphs in the final instar).

Taxa of the families Macromiidae, Corduliidae, and Libellulidae, which comprise the superfamily Libelluloidea, are the subject matter of this volume. The 76 species are arranged in 20 genera. All taxa are characterized structurally and ecologically, and keys are provided for their identification. Excellent line drawings and photographs illustrate diagnostic features of both adults and immatures.

Descriptions of structural features of species are presented in small type, with data on synonymy, habitat and range, distribution in Canada, and field notes, in type of a larger size. The field notes, for the most part, are clearly expressed accounts of Professor Walker's observations, based on more than a half century of work with Odonata. Also included are citations of published observations

of other workers.

An Addenda and Corrigenda section up-dates the material included in the earlier volumes, and an extensive Bibliography provides an excellent introduction to the literature of dragonflies.

Care has been taken to ease the task of the reader in seeking specific information. The text is extensively cross-referenced with page numbers. There are indexes for subject matter and names of authors. Additionally, an "Odonata Index" provides an alphabetical list of names of taxa, with specific epithets under their respective generic names, and with page references to definitive descriptions in boldface, followed by page references to the appropriate key, followed by other references.

The University of Toronto Press is to be congratulated for its usual meticulous attention to details of layout, production, and binding, which has resulted in an excellent, though expensive, book. Publication costs were met with funds not only from traditional sources (National Research Council of Canada and University of Toronto Press), but also by a grant from a seemingly unexpected source – the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show.

Knowledge of northern dragonflies is now such that systematists can turn from description and diagnosis to other aspects of dragonfly diversity: speciation, phylogeny, and zoogeography – both historical and ecological. Morphologists, ecologists, geneticists, biochemists, and behaviorists and other physiologists can take up study of this group with a high degree of assurance that most of the species can be recognized. Thus, information gathered can be associated with the proper names and hence stored under them for retrieval by future biologists. Professor Corbet concluded the Preface with the hope that, after *Homo sapiens* has brought under control his own population growth and destructive power, the remaining freshwater habitats would be sufficient to sustain a diverse and vigorous dragonfly fauna. If this happy situation is realized, I'm sure biologists of that time who study these fine insects, will receive guidance and inspiration from the work of Edmund Walker and Philip Corbet.

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